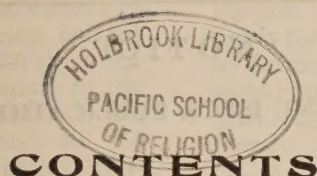




The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● MAY 1976



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Asia Sunday

The Church of South India along with 78 churches and 16 member councils (of N.C.C.'s) from 17 countries is a member of the Christian Council of Asia. The East Asia Christian Conference as it was then called was inaugurated in 1959. It was the first of such regional councils to come into existence as an affiliated body of the World Council of Churches. Christians are in minority situations in practically every country in Asia. The Council now represents approximately 40 million Christians in Asia. The Christian Conference of Asia has called upon its members to observe the 30th of May as Asia Sunday.

It has become the usual pattern in the life of the churches to emphasise different aspects in the life of the Church on different Sundays. For example, Youth Sunday, Hospital Sunday, Bible Sunday etc. Invariably a member is called upon to preach and explain the work of the particular group and a collection is earmarked for them. How is the Church of South India going to observe Asia Sunday?

Certainly earmarking a Sunday for specific purposes helps the Churches to inform, educate and hopefully interest the members in the work that is being carried on. Many would affirm that the first priority is for prayers asking for God's strength and guidance to the work. In this issue a number of prayer requests are given as suggestions by the General Secretary of the C.C.A. The very designation of a Sunday almost confines the activities to 'prayer' and to concerns for Asian Christians. If, however, the people are asked to observe an Asia Week, then there would be opportunities for sharing of information through films, exhibitions, addresses by other Asians and even a joint observance with peoples of all Faiths.

When we observe Asia Sunday it is not basically to remind ourselves of the work of the churches, as the work is not done in isolation, but in the historical context of Asia. The masses of the people of Asia are under subjection to the exploitative forces. Most are deprived of their right to the basic necessities of life. Many do not have the privilege to express themselves openly of their need. The system and the environment under which they live imprisons them and they become poor victims. In observance of the Sunday we remind ourselves of our responsibilities to these people.

For administrative purposes the work of the C.C.A. is divided into three units namely, Message and Communication, Life and Action and Justice and Service. Work towards unity of the churches, the proclamation of the gospel, dialogue with members of all Faiths and the process of communication come under the first unit. Work among women, youth, education both formal and informal and a continued theological reflection are part of the work of the Life and Action unit. Under Justice and Service unit, the development and service projects, health care, minority and race issues are included.

Among many needs, the C.C.A. has given a very high priority to the problem of hunger in Asia. It is heartening to know that Mr. Alexander Devasunderam, a member of the Church of South India is responsible for this



project. Further, the Rev. H. F. J. Daniel, a presbyter of the C.S.I. is an Associate General Secretary of the C.C.A. The C.C.A. has also given a high priority in their work to issues of human rights in Asia.

What does it all mean to the members of our parishes? Repeatedly it has been said that the eyes of the Indian Christians are still turned towards the West and they hardly know of their neighbours in Asia. There is a curious fascination towards the 'Principalities and the Powers' of the Western Boards rather than any affinity towards our fellow Christians similarly situated like us. Perhaps only a moratorium of Western personnel and funds for a minimum period of five years would help us to develop new relations with Asian Christians. That would certainly be an interdependent relationship rather than a debilitating dependent relationship with the West. In spite of the existence of an organisation like the C.C.A. for nearly three decades, yet there is hardly any exchange of personnel or help extended to meet the needs of one another. We who have been privileged to receive for so long should begin to share in the poverty of the Asians. After the birth of Bangladesh when there was a need for doctors and nurses, in spite of its best efforts the Church of South India could not get even one person to go there. How do we create and forge new relationships which would be meaningful to our membership in the C.C.A.? During the tragic Vietnam war a few of the churches regularly prayed for the people of that country. Afterwards there has been an ominous silence about Asia in our churches. So, as we observe the Sunday we primarily think, remember, pray for and begin to endeavour to struggle together with the people of Asia. The next Assembly of the C.C.A. is scheduled to be held in Manila in 1977 and the theme chosen is 'Jesus Christ in Asian Suffering and Hope'. One of the significant contributions which the Church of South India can make is to study the Bible as to what it has to say to us about our responsibilities and share the insights with others. The C.C.A. would welcome stories, poems, prayers and testimonies on the theme of the Assembly. As the Church of South India has a rich collection of lyrics containing songs which came out of the depth of the spiritual experience of our forefathers, indeed we should be able to share the cries of agony as they emanate from the depth of the hearts of our people today. We hope the presbyters and the laity will be encouraged to study and prepare sermons and articles on the subject and we very much hope that we will share these with our Christian brethren through the C.C.A. To begin with, it will be an active participation in the work of the C.C.A. thus hopefully leading towards sharing in the concerns of our fellow Asians.

Christian Conference of Asia

Asia Sunday May 30, 1976

Dear Friends,

On the Sunday before Pentecost in 1959, the Christian Conference of Asia (formerly the East Asia Christian Conference) was born. This was a turning-point in our Asian Church history. For the first time we had a forum of our own and a place where we could talk together about the mission of the church in Asia.

The CCA has now designated the Sunday before Pentecost as Asia Sunday. It will be a day on which our friends in many parts of Asia will join in prayers of thanksgiving for this ecumenical fellowship we have with one another.

We want to make Asia Sunday a regular event in our churches life. In these recent years we have discovered how much we need each others prayers and so the annual observance in local churches will be for us a reminder of the way in which we are bound together in our faith.

Please do what you can to make this day have some meaning in your church.

With our good wishes for your work and witness.

Yours sincerely,

YAP KIM HAO,
General Secretary.

THEME :

I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord! Psalms 122:1

On Asia Sunday we ask all local congregations to pray for their neighbours in other Asian countries.

For Australia : That the people will discover their self-identity.

For Bangladesh : That the people will triumph over floods and famine.

For Burma : That isolation from the family of nations might end.

For China : That Christians will be encouraged in their search for an authentic expression of the faith.

For Hong Kong : That corruption will be overcome and every person will have dignity.

For India : That caste and communalism will be ended and a more equal distribution of goods take place.

For the Indochina countries : That the people will be reconciled in reconstruction efforts.

For Indonesia : That the church will be strengthened in its service to the nation.

For Japan : That economic power may be used wisely for the betterment of all people.

For Korea : That the country may be united and that freedom and justice will prevail.

For Malaysia : That the races and religions will live together in harmony and accord.

For New Zealand : That affluence and isolation do not obscure the needs of other people.

For Pakistan : That good government will ensure work and dignity for all.

For the Philippines : That civil liberties will be restored.

For Singapore : That economic progress will not be at the expense of human progress.

For Sri Lanka : That the races will work together in harmony for the development of all.

For Taiwan ; That the people will find their place in the family of Asian nations.

For Thailand : That a stable government will give good leadership.

A Personal Meditation at the end of the Nairobi Assembly

Out of the depths we cry unto thee, O Lord . . .
The Fifth Assembly is at an end.
May he be with us as we examine the depths of our
hearts that this examination may not end in fatigue and
despair.

We came to this Assembly carrying various burdens,
all of us, whether we realized it or not.
We came with deep anxieties, a homeless people,
homeless in the world as it is,
weary of suffering, weary of watching hopelessly the
suffering of others, we also came with hopes:
in some hope was a spark, in others a torch,
but all of us came longing to see signs of the one burn-
ing hope which would make us free, which would make
us one.

Did we translate our fears and hopes into prayers out of
the depth?

Did we dare to expose our churches, our movements, our
institutions and programmes for what they are before
God?

Did we expose ourselves in our weakness and helplessness
before God and before our brothers and sisters?

Did we allow our priorities to be scrutinized and shaken?
Did we listen and receive? Or did we talk and
countertalk?

Did we really listen to and cherish the confession of others
before we conjured up and affirmed our own evangelistic
zeal?

Did we listen to the cry of the chronically hungry masses
and the cry of those broken and crushed daily by our
systems and structures?

Did we listen to the silence of the voiceless millions,
and the silence of those humiliated and discarded by the
powerful and the rich?

And did we listen to the mounting anger of the oppressed
in every continent?

'We need to recover a sense of urgency', we said;
but did we not instead yield to a mood of nostalgia,
clinging to revered familiar words and ways,
unable to discern the spirits behind the words,
unable to give account of the signs of our time?

Never before have dreams of a world living in peace
and harmony so united all humankind and a suffering
creation.

How do we respond, we, people of Christ?
How do we give account of the hope we claim and
confess—

the hope for a new heaven to come,
but also for a new earth in which justice dwells?

This is not the time for despair and resignation.
God has time—but his creatures cannot wait.

This is not the time to conjure up the spirit of optimistic
activism.

We have been deeply disillusioned about our power to
change the world

and to change ourselves.

This is not the time to look back in nostalgia
to the centuries of worldwide missionary outreach
longing for the recovery of the sense of evangelistic
urgency

which inspired our missionary forbears.

This is the time of commitment in the name which is
above all names—

Jesus Christ who frees and unites—
to the agenda of this Assembly, most of which lies
before us.

We have hardly begun to spell out and denounce
the manifold names of the powers that enslave us,
of the spirits that divide us—each of us in his own
situation. So

'we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the
Spirit himself
intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.'

This is the time for commitment to our people
to whom we return in humility, humble as homeless
people have to be.

We return to them in hope—as people who have been
assured

of their citizenship in a better city to come
We return with joy and courage, having seen a far
glimpse

of the new Jerusalem—the one coming down out of
heaven to earth.

We return as people who cannot rest until we see the
design
of God's City taking shape in our pilgrim communities.

We return with a new sensitivity
to God's promises in his Word,
to discerning the spirits in our world and in our
churches,

to the mystery of suffering which we cannot explain
but which is sanctified through Christ's own suffering
for us.

In this sensitivity and faithfulness to God's creation
we dare to pray
THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN
HEAVEN

One step forward, two steps backward

NAIROBI 1975

First of all let me make it clear that this is not a comprehensive report of the Assembly proceedings and findings. During the past three months several official and unofficial reports have been published all over the world giving a complete picture of the Assembly. Mine is a humble attempt to X-ray the thoughts, words and actions at Nairobi from a particular angle.

The old secular journalist in me would have flashed from Nairobi to India hot news headlines as follows:

- Black is beautiful, joyful and powerful
- A panorama of cultures, colours and costumes, music, singing and dancing.
- 3 million dollars to discuss all problems under the sun in the jargon of the theological oligarchy and the intellectual aristocracy.
- Women stoop to conquer; youth tamed and subdued.
- Can't call the tune, won't pay the piper
- The ghost of cold war raises its head
- Even in worship the Assembly applaud the African choir
- Can sing and pray together but not drink and eat together Lord's Supper.
- Elections: not wholly by seeking Guidance but also by scheming plots
- Metropolitan on the dancing floor.

The Theme

Debates and discussions on the theme—Jesus Christ frees and unites—clearly brought out the dialectic tension between freedom (liberation) and unity (reconciliation). The dynamics of the Assembly as a whole, was that it was an affirmation of unity in Christ followed by a struggle with each other for human liberation in the name of Christ. The message of the Assembly is 'Let us struggle together'. Or it could be the phrase used by Dr. M. M. Thomas in summing up the theological trends in the ecumenical movement since Uppsala: 'Spirituality for Combat'. Christian people involved in combat against injustice have to reinforce their spirit and seek the justification of their vocation in their faith. Christian spirituality must help at this point or will be given up for more secularised spiritualities for combat.

The freedom and unity in Christ demand of us taking stances against every form of injustice, exploitation and discrimination and command us to struggle to realize God's will for peace, justice and freedom throughout society. The Assembly statement entitled 'A Call to Confess and Proclaim' elaborated the Whole Gospel, the Whole Person, the Whole Church and the Whole World. At this point it is worth quoting from the preparatory statement of the Christian Peace Conference on the Fifth Assembly. 'As members of the C.P.C, we are deeply troubled by the fact that the churches in today's world are closely tied with the power structures of the so-called 'Christian nations', which is the reason for the participation of such churches in economic oppression, exploitation and division. They cease to be forces of liberation and unity'. No wonder it was declared 'In Africa Jesus Christ enslaves and divides'.

Ecumenicals Vs Evangelicals

The search for Christian unity is an integral part of the search for human unity and the struggles of different peoples for dignity and justice. In working out how the struggle for social justice and the proclamation of the Gospel are to be related, Dr. Thomas called for a true theology of dialogue. This dialogue must be faithful to the centrality of Jesus Christ, but must also grapple with the secular world and see Christ at work in other faiths and ideologies. Evangelism is not mere words, but words in a community of dialogue, relating them to *The Word*, the ground of all community life—'Christ-centred Syncretism'.

The only Hindu participant has commented: 'It was a historic Assembly. It was the first to invite guests from other religious traditions—one each from Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism. Yet there was a small but very vocal section among the delegates which was against "dialogue" and against seeking "wider community"'. They felt that such efforts would endanger and compromise the Christian faith and felt content to seek community only with the Christian Church. To the rest of the world the Church could only proclaim the Gospel; it could not have any dialogue of an open mind with men and women of other faiths. If the faith and integrity of other persons are not respected, human community can at best be only a dream'.

A Swing-Back ?

At Uppsala in 1968 the Fourth Assembly, coming in the wake of Church and Society conference in Geneva, exercised itself on many major issues like justice, racism and poverty. Since 1968 the W.C.C. had taken a radical stance on many matters, especially compared to the period 1948 to 1968 (Amsterdam to Uppsala) with emphasis on unity, faith and order, evangelism, etc. There was a definite effort by some to swing back from this forward march. Even before the Assembly, pressure was brought to bear on the W.C.C. through resolutions, statements, cut in financial contributions, threats of withdrawal, etc. in order to force it to retrace its radical stance. There was resistance to its Programme to Combat Racism, grants to the African Liberation Movements, attitude to violent social struggles, programme of Dialogue with People of Other Faiths, etc. To see the world from the perspective of the struggles of the disinherited, in the poor and rich nations, is a difficult task for the lords and masters of the affluent world.

Many had come hoping or fearing that there would be a confrontation between the West and the Third World. But the speeches of Robert McAfee Brown and Charles Birch from the West and of Michael Manley and Burgess Carr from the Third World set the tone for a cautious, if not timid, Assembly. (What a pity there was not a single plenary speaker from the socialist world). The single most important reason why the Assembly was quiet was the evident self-critical attitude that almost all the participants brought to Nairobi. The self-critical spirit was so strong that many Asian delegates regretted that the Assembly made no mention of specific violations of human rights prevalent in their area. It is easy to

fall into an intellectual and moral or spiritual rationalisation of injustice. If the W.C.C. is forced to give up its prophetic voice and fail to support the struggle of the poor and the non-persons, it becomes a spokesman of the establishment. Accommodation without encounter is not a Christian alternative.

Perhaps the C.P.C. anticipated this situation when it declared to the Assembly. 'We are made bold by the Gospel to proclaim with forth-rightness the demand of justice, mercy and peace. Certain situations may require our taking stances which are unpopular. Such resolute and prophetic activity, no doubt, leads us to adequate decisions and actions which we believe is the summons of the Gospel for us.'

A Just and Sustainable Society

Prime Minister Manley, the second head of state to deliver a major address to a W.C.C. Assembly, spoke on 'From Shackles of Domination and Oppression'. He condemned capitalism outright in unmistakable terms. 'At no point in history has an economic system reflected the process of domination in political, social, psychological and ultimately, even in philosophical terms, more completely than under capitalism If capitalism was the engine that lifted man to new levels of economic and technological progress, it was equally the burial ground of his moral integrity.' It was really surprising to many that he summarily dismissed the communist economic order as state capitalism. He made a strong plea for 'true people's democracy', which he defined as 'the reality of a government of the people, by the people and for the people and all of the time'. If these are the essential characteristics of a just and sustainable society, that takes us back to the people question. How can people who are seriously trying to work that out be supported and encouraged? The W.C.C. doesn't yet have a clear answer to that.

Prime Minister Manley, a Methodist layman, devoted the last part of his address to the role of churches. 'The churches should be prepared to take their stand against fascism, against racism, against oppression, against undue materialism in human affairs, against elitism, against imperialism and neo-colonialism against all those forces that militate against men's need for self-expression, and freedom in a context of equality, security and social justice'. Saying that he spoke for millions of lay men and women, he called on the W.C.C. to give leadership and inspiration 'in the struggle to replace the contemporary regime of inequality and oppression within and between nations by a new international and national order founded on justice.'

Limits to Growth or Unlimited Greed?

In the plenary panel discussions much was said about limits to growth and consumerism and rightly so. But there was nobody to point out that this aspect can be purposely projected and magnified to cover a multitude of sins. Perhaps this could have been done if the panel was constituted with a socialist-economist also and with one capitalist theologian less.

It is true that 6 per cent of the world population consumes 40 per cent of the world's resources. But the most important point is that the present crisis is not one of overall scarcity but of gross maldistribution. For example, the food crisis, both in the short and long terms, is man-made. Man has at his disposal the technology to produce sufficient food to meet the needs of a world population several times larger than today's but the economic and political will to do is lacking. For the

last four decades, since the Great Depression, the system of food production for the capitalist market has been characterised chiefly by limiting and restricting production. Grain growers in the developed countries get government subsidies to let large portions of their land lie fallow. In Australia, poultry farmers slaughter 10 million chickens to jack up meat prices. In France truck farmers destroy 600,000 tons of tomatoes for the same reason.

Even the C.P.C. is not as much aware of this unlimited greed as they are aware of limits to growth.

Women and Youth

There was a larger percentage of women (20%) and youth (10%) at the Assembly. The women made their presence felt and voiced their grievances. There was no doubt a difference in emphasis between women of the Western world and those of the Third world in their approach to women's liberation. The latter linked it closely to the total liberation of their societies. The W.C.C. has yet to really begin to face realistically and whole-heartedly women's issues and begin to take seriously the necessity of women's full participation in the decision-making structures of the Church. The real struggle for women's liberation lies in the local situations.

At Uppsala youth formed a substantial and separate block. Consequent upon the Uppsala Assembly's decision, youth were incorporated in the church delegations as official delegates. And they were lost in their delegations! On the whole the youth input in the Assembly was inconsequential. This was disheartening and suprising for an organisation whose heritage is rooted in a student movement.

Is it true: 'We invited women to shape the Assembly and granted them a morning slot (like religion on radio in between the pop songs). We invited youth to do their thing and passed out their report, suitably cyclostyled, at the door. We denounced multinationals and relied on them to fly us, feed and house us. We debated some bloody, struggle, some absurd injustice, then made a statement.'

The Future

Nairobi was an Assembly of new questions rather than clear answers. The Assembly did indeed represent the churches — in their weakness and their strength. But the most important issue is as to who represented the churches; the upper-middle class elite and the middle class intelligentsia or the vast majority of have-nots and non-persons. I am afraid the former, who pretended to struggle for the latter, instead of struggling with the latter. Philip Potter suggested that in the years to come the W.C.C. use 75% of its time and resources to promote communication with and between the churches and 25% in seeking to be prophetic and challenging. Here again the question is whether 'the churches' constitute only the ecclesiastical oligarchy and intellectual aristocracy or also the people. If so, the ecumenical movement can hope to come out of the wilderness of which Dr. Potter spoke.

The Assembly made a strong affirmation of the centrality of the faith which is the mainspring of our social and political involvement. But unless this enables us to take three steps forward in quick succession, we cannot claim that 'there was no retreat from engagement in the problems and struggles of the world' as reported by ONE WORLD. If not the 'Pilgrim Assembly' will get lost in the wilderness.

People ask me: Was it a successful Assembly? Did

Jesus Christ free and unite in Nairobi? My answer is: An Assembly is not an end but the beginning of new actions. It all depends on how much we in the churches implement and carry out the resolutions and recommendations of the Assembly.

Let me conclude by sharing a post-Assembly experience in the 'Christian State' of Kerala in India. At Nariobi even the W.C.C. constitution was amended to emphasise visible unity in faith. But on return from Nairobi,

the two rival factions of a big Church in Kerala organised demonstrations and counter-demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of their followers wasting a few millions of Rupees. When the rivalry resulted in physical clashes and a murder, the Hindu communist Chief Minister of the State had to intervene and admonish the Church leaders to stop the internecine fight for faith.

A. K. THAMPY.

20-Point Programme

A meeting of the representatives of the Catholic Union of India and the Christian Union of India, in Bangalore held at the St. Mark's Cathedral Parish Hall on Tuesday, 10th February 1976 affirmed their support of the 20-Point economic programme for the amelioration of the economic hardships of the weaker sections of the population and decided to call upon all the churches to co-operate with the Government as well as other agencies for the implementation of the programme.

It was further decided (1) to organise volunteer groups to disseminate information about the different provisions of the programme such as debt relief, house sites for the poor, abolition of bonded labour, concessions for student hostels, promotion of co-operative societies etc., so that the weaker sections can get the maximum benefit from the programme, and (2) to encourage members of the two unions and the Churches to participate actively in the Citizens Councils proposed to be set up for the implementation of the programme.

DR. J. R. CHANDRAN,
President,
Christian Union of India.

E. JAYACHANDRA RAJ,
National Executive and Public
Relations Secretary,
Catholic Union of India.

Canon John Asirvatham

At the time of the inauguration of the union he was chairman of the North Church Council of Tirunelveli Diocese, and he was therefore the leader of the ex-Anglican group which was to form about one-fifth of the membership of the church in the new Diocese of Madura and Ramnad. In all the difficult work of hammering out a constitution and of growing together into one family he had the delicate task of representing the Anglican tradition in an overwhelmingly Congregationalist environment. I do not think he found it easy, but I know that his combination of firmness and courtesy were very great assets in the earliest days of the Diocese.

While we remember the great leaders who played their part in the central counsels of the church, we should not forget those who did the equally difficult work of fostering a true growth in unity at the level of the dioceses. Among these John Asirvatham was one, and I would like to pay public tribute to a fine Churchman a true gentleman, and a dear friend.

RT. REV. LESSLIE NEWBIGIN.

Sex Education—A Concerted Work

Now many parents are troubled and worried about their children regarding sex education. But they do not have the courage to handle this subject. Some of them are in favour of family life education and sex education in our schools and some do not have faith even in that approach.

Sex education should involve both facts and values. Human survival alone is not enough. We must go beyond the simple joys of staying alive and reproducing our kind. There are sexual joys of the spirit as well as the flesh. Survival and fulfilment must go forward together if man is to transform and transcend himself and become more fully human. Healthy human beings have a deep-seated need for ethical and spiritual meaning and self-fulfilment that links their lives to something they consider greater than themselves.

Hence the role of school is to include the biological, social, psychological, ethical and spiritual dimensions of human sexuality and morality in some way or other with the formal subjects which the teachers handle in the regular classes. This is important since our young people need to develop positive, instead of negative peer group sexual standards. Their aim should be to make sex a constructive instead of a destructive force in their lives.

Modern youth is in trouble and we had better heed their cry for help before it is too late. Young people are faced with new views of human sexuality, new approaches to boy-girl relationships, new views of love, affection, marriage, parenthood and family life, new sexual issues and new life styles and value systems. But sexual behaviour is partly inborn and partly learned. Sexual morality is partly caught and partly taught. This warrants the school to pay attention to this issue.

Some of the guidelines suggested for sex teaching are—Don't preach but teach,—Don't dominate but motivate—Don't tell them but ask them,—Don't impart facts but change the behaviour. By doing this, young people can be taught to respect evidence in decision making and to change their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in accordance with pertinent facts and concepts.

The problem cannot be solved wholly by one agency alone. Grass root efforts by the home, school, church and community service units are necessary to approach this problem. So we must all accept our share of the risk and responsibility. We must work together to develop family life and sex education programmes from childhood to adulthood. But it should be according to the age, grade, maturity and to local community and school needs. The purpose of sex education is to help our young people to live better, more enjoyable and fruitful lives with the concerted effort of all agencies. So let us not allow sex education to go down in the drain by sitting idly and criticising the youth.

BEULAH RABINDRADAS.

Problems of Christian Communications in Asia

When one is asked to discuss communications, one is tempted to talk straight away in conventional categories. One asks such questions as, whether there are transmitters and how far the transmissions reach, whether there are printing presses and publishing houses and what sort of circulation publications enjoy, whether those who broadcast and those who write are proficient in handling their media, whether sufficient funds are forthcoming, to sustain the broadcasting and publishing efforts and whether the content of the message sought to be transmitted is consistent with the goals of the total communications effort. So the debate on communications invariably centres on the adequacy of apparatus and hardware, skills and training, financial resources and funding, and on the need for a refinement of content.

The first premise of this paper is that while all of these elements may be necessary in some measure or other for ensuring effective communications, they cannot by themselves achieve that end. That means that while they may be necessary conditions, they do not by themselves guarantee effective communications.

Credibility

The second premise of this paper is that the most important element in any communication effort is credibility—both of the message and of the communication system as a whole. We may have all the conditions and the best communication skills but if we are not likely to be believed, we cannot claim that communication has taken place.

The final test of credibility is the recipient wanting to test the validity of the message in his own experience or his disposition to act upon it. To use a crude analogy, if a bald man were to try to sell to another a one-hundred per cent sure remedy for baldness, it is unlikely that the prospective customer would even want to try out the remedy. Christian communications today is somewhat in the position of that hapless salesman.

Value Bias

The third premise underlying this paper is that a communications system is never value-neutral. It does not exist over and beyond the social and economic milieu within which it functions. It is invariably owned by the dominant class within a society and tends to reflect and propagate the values of that class. Even where communication systems claim to be autonomous like the BBC in Britain or the CBS in the United States they are in fact the custodians of the class that dominate those societies.

Christian communications in Asia and elsewhere is hampered in the first instance by the failure to take cognisance of the first premise. Most organisations that concern themselves with Christian communications seem to assume that if buildings, equipment, technology, skills and financial resources are brought together in an appropriate mix the Gospel can be communicated as a matter of course. Actually this way of thinking continues to persist only because Christian communicators fail to take account of the second and third premises of this paper.

These premises together serve to undermine the credibility of the Christian message in the minds of millions of non-Christians to whom the Gospel is to be communicated.

Evangelism and Commerce

Credibility is undermined firstly through historical factors. Although individual Christian missionaries from the west had carried their evangelical work into Asia from the time of Christ himself, Christianity as we know it in Asia today, was largely the product of European economic and political expansion that followed in the wake of trade from about the late Sixteenth Century. The rapid extension of trade from the Sixteenth Century onwards was motivated principally by the desire to acquire and accumulate wealth. In their greed for the riches of the Americas, Africa and the Orient, the Europeans did not hesitate to put down not only existing political structures but, deliberately, cultures and local religions as well. Christianity which followed in the wake of these penetrations depended for its spread upon the patronage of the imperial power and was used by it as a cementing factor in the growth and consolidation of its political hegemony.

The local societies reacted in one of two ways. They either resisted foreign penetration and were ruthlessly put down or finding it expedient to accept the religion and culture of the conquering race meekly became Christians. These conversions which were really proselytizations on a mass scale brought into existence minority but privileged Christian communities within the local societies.

From the Seventeenth and well into the Twentieth Century, Christian elite minorities remained privileged and dependent upon the imperial power. At best they were a conduit through which metropolitan values flowed into the local society. Even after independence came to Asian societies the role of the Christian minority vis-a-vis the dominant economic class did not alter basically. The Church aligned itself with the economically powerful class and remained, principally through the instrument of missionary school, a weapon in the hands of the foreign and local bourgeois in their efforts to preserve the status quo. The responsibility for championing the cause of the poor and the underprivileged subsequently passed substantially into the hands of Socialist political parties. As a result there emerged a false dichotomy, completely untenable by Biblical criteria—namely the identification of 'spiritual' Christianity with capitalist values and the relegate of the responsibility for liberating the down-trodden to 'materialist' Marxism.

This cleavage is the principal impediment to Christian credibility in Asia today. We try to communicate the Gospel across classes from positions which through historical factors and current socio-economic relations, have been rendered implausible.

Asian Elites

Credibility is undermined secondly by the very nature of Asian social structures. As with all Third World

societies, Asian societies are class ridden. They are characterised by a minority elite owning the means of economic and social power and enjoying life styles wholly dissimilar to those adopted by the majority of people in them. The communication systems of these societies are invariably owned or dominated by the minority elites. When the Christian Gospel moves in the channels of such a system it naturally loses credibility.

Self-denying Role

What are the options open to the Church in Asia today? Quite obviously it cannot undo the facts of history. Whether it likes it or not the associations the Church has acquired over the past four centuries weigh down the Christian communications effort like a millstone. But where it failed in the past, it can today take its place alongside the poor and the oppressed. This will require a near total reversal of its former role of being the ally and agent of imperial power. It will also have to divest itself of its own economic power base which makes its claim to being the champion of the poor and the oppressed sound somewhat implausible if not absurd. It will have to take sides unequivocally at a political level, against all forms of exploitation however costly such a posture might be in terms of lost patronage and influence. The crucial question is whether the Church's ostensible concern for a just society is genuine enough to push it into such a costly self-denying role.

Two things resulted from this—firstly, the Christians remained Christians only as long as it was politically expedient to do so. This meant that with the withdrawal of imperial patronage their adherence to the Christian religion diminished. Secondly, the local Christian community came to be identified by the mass of the local people as an alien element professing a different language and generally adopting completely

different life styles. It became thereby a social class owing allegiance to a metropolitan power.

The provision of transmitters and radio sets, the dissemination of literature and literacy, the search for funds and the training of skills can yield results only if that initial political commitment is undertaken. But, because the Churches are not prepared to make that initial commitment, for reasons which should be self-evident, we tend to salve our Christian consciences by pouring money into communications infra-structure and by trying to straddle the globe with transmitters and publishing houses. What therefore passes for Christian communications today is for the most part an excuse for not adopting the more costly political posture.

There is a deeper premise underlying all of the sub-missions made in this paper and that is, that a Christian cannot support an acquisitive and individualist society and yet remain a Christian. The search for private profit and the free enterprise market economy which is necessary for it, must inevitably lead to competition, greed, conflict, corruption, theft and war. This is not a hypothesis that needs empirical proof. It is deducible logically from one's knowledge of human nature. A society which manifests these qualities cannot be a society owning allegiance to Christ. Christian LOVE is virtually the opposite of the individualism which operates in a profit oriented, free enterprise society.

This then is the basic problem for Christian communications in Asia today—that, if the Gospel is to be believed and accepted, the Churches and the Christian communities which stand behind the Gospel, will first have to liberate themselves from the captivity of economic, social and political elites.

Courtesy: CCA News.

NEVILLE JAYAWEERA.

National Board of Casa

The first meeting of the newly constituted National Board of CASA was held on Wednesday the 31st March at the YMCA Tourist Hostel, New Delhi. The most Rev. N. D. Ananda Rao Samuel the Moderator of the Church of South India was elected as the Chairman. Mr. L. Bizo of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India was elected as the Vice-Chairman. Bishop Eric A. Mitchell of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia was elected as the Treasurer. Mr. P. C. Joseph

was requested to continue as Acting Director of CASA till the end of May before which a final decision will be made on the choice of a Director.

A special Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. K. T. Chandy to study the involvement in terms of expenditure in projects and administration in the context of the final resources of CASA. The Director of CASA was asked to explore the possibilities for raising funds for CASA from within India.

United Theological College, Bangalore

The Annual Meeting of the Governing Council and the Valedictory Service were held on Saturday, 3rd April, 1976, in the College premises and the following decisions were taken at that time.

1. Autonomy Status

The Council noted with great satisfaction that the Senate of Serampore College at their last meeting in February, 1976 had granted the status of autonomy within the Senate system with effect from June, 1976. At present this autonomy is limited to the B. D. and B.R.E. degrees and the Diploma in Religious Knowledge (D.R.K.). For these courses the College is entirely responsible for the framing of curriculum and the evaluation of the students. The degrees and diplomas will be awarded to the candidates recommended by the College Faculty. The United Theological College is the first College affiliated to Serampore College to be granted this status of autonomy.

The Council further stressed the importance of practical experience of students, during their training in the College in different frontiers of the Church's ministry including action programmes oriented to social change, such as those relevant for a slum community in the city or a rural community. In this connection general approval was given to the proposal of the Faculty that the College seeks involvement in rural development project in a village within reasonable distance and authorised the Executive committee to take appropriate action for the purchase of land and equipment after careful scrutiny of the details of the plan.

2. Relations with a Secular University

The Council reiterated an earlier statement about the desirability of close relations with secular universities and authorised the Principal to explore again possibilities of establishing close relationships with the Bangalore University.

3. Finances

The Council decided to appeal to the churches in India and abroad for an amount of Rs. 37,00,000 for endowment, Rs. 16,66,000 for Capital need and Rs. 1,39,000 for recurring expenditure.

The urgency of securing additional staff and equipment for the Library was recognised and it was decided to give very high priority to these needs in the present financial appeal. It was further agreed that the highest

priority should be given for a full time trained Archivist, a copying machine and an additional microfilm reader.

4. Investment Policy

It was decided that in future while choosing the Banks and Companies for investing College funds priority should be given to those Banks and companies which help the strengthening of the weaker sections of people and promote the concerns of the College for a just society. It was decided to seek information from the Banks and Companies with whom the College has at present invested or plans to invest in future regarding their employment policy, investment policy, nature of the business they promote or run, etc.

5. Niles Memorial Scholarship

The first two awards of this scholarship were made for 1976-77 to

- (a) Miss Priscilla Daniels (CSI) for research in Christian Missions in South India in the first half of the 19th century.
- (b) Rev. A. Philip Athyal (Mar Thoma) for research in the methods of Evangelism used in India today.

6. Student Participation in Council Meetings

The Council accepted a Faculty recommendation that in future six representatives of the student body be invited to attend the annual meetings of the Council as observers with right to speak if permitted by the President. At the present session also three student leaders participated as observers.

7. Valedictory Service

At the Valedictory Service held on Sunday, 4th April, 44 candidates received diplomas and certificates. Of these 31 are going into the parish ministry of different churches, 6 are going as theological teachers and the others will be serving in different forms of specialised ministry such as Bible translators, youth workers, etc.

The Valedictory Sermon was preached by Prof. Saral K. Chatterji, the Director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and President of the Senate of Serampore College.

Dr. J. R. CHANDRAN.

Pentecost, 1976

Message from the Presidents of the World Council of Churches

When Our Lord told his disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit he said: 'He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you' (John 16:14). The same thought is expressed in his words: 'He will bear witness to me' (John 15:26).

Now this is precisely what happened on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem when all the apostles were gathered in one place. They spoke in different tongues about the mighty works of God, that is to say they proclaimed the great central facts of the history of salvation: the coming of Christ, his life and teaching, his death on the Cross, his resurrection. The men and women who heard and believed this message became a new community held together by a common faith and by a new creative way of life. The Christian Church was born.

The Holy Spirit continues to work in this way. He makes Christ known to those who did not know him. He sustains and renews the faith of the believers. He leads them back to the source of their faith. He gives Christians courage and power to witness for Christ. He helps them to discover in the tensions and struggles of our time what is God's will for his people. He binds them together in a fellowship which transcends all human divisions.

This is also what the Holy Spirit did to us at the World Council Assembly in Nairobi. Once again we

were brought face to face with the central truths of the Gospel. We were shown new ways of living in obedience to our Lord. And thus we were enabled to stay together in spite of the forces which can so easily divide us.

When we open our lives to the Spirit we will also be able to make a decisive contribution to humankind's great struggle for survival and for a world of justice, freedom and peace. We have been warned that our world must change its values if it is to avoid catastrophe. The Spirit who glorifies Christ and all that he stands for will send us the true priorities.

Let us therefore repeat the prayer which was used in the closing service of the Assembly at Nairobi:

Holy Spirit of God
fill us with confidence
and make us available;
teach us to pray
and to hear the moanings of men;
help us interpret
the signs of the times,
and prepare us
for the Kingdom of God
each day and forever.

Amen.

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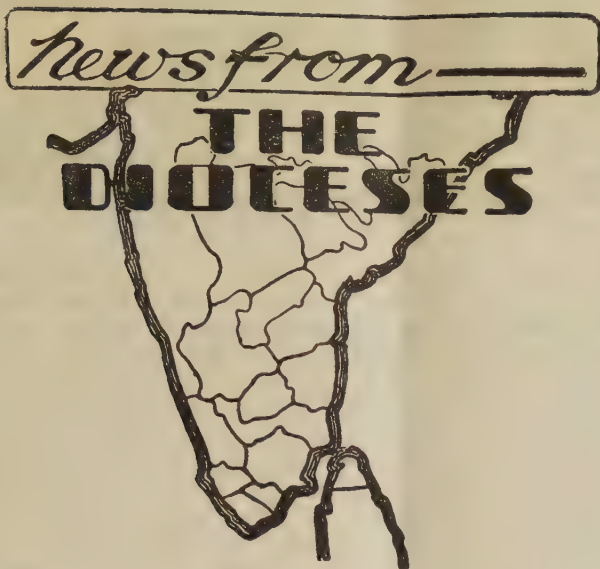
Unmarried women candidates aged between 17 and 24 years and with a pre-medical qualification are eligible to

apply for this 3 years and 9 months' (internship) course leading to B.Sc. Nursing degree, starting from 1st August, 1976. For prospectus and application form please apply to the Principal, College of Nursing, Christian Medical College and Hospital, Ludhiana-141 001, Punjab, together with a crossed postal order for Rs. 5 for this course.

Note: One good deserving Christian girl (depending entirely on merit) will get scholarship to meet the full expenses of the course.

WANTED

Bombay YMCA invites applications from young Christian bachelors below 23 years of age as on 30 April 1976, with working knowledge of Marathi & Hindi as Trainees, in the Assistant Secretaries cadre of the Association. Probationary period will be for one year, carrying an all-inclusive emolument of Rs. 450/- per mensem and a free bed in one of your hostels. On successful conclusion they will be eligible for confirmation. Apply: General Secretary, Bombay YMCA, 18 Club Back Road, Bombay Central, Bombay-400 008.



KARNATAKA SOUTHERN DIOCESE

The Diocese has started some service projects and it intends to start some more particularly among the hill tribes. One such project it intends starting is at Abalathi of Periyapatna taluk where it will assist the Government in constructing houses for the hill tribes. The Diocese is taking the responsibility of helping the hill tribes by giving their contribution and co-operation and help to cultivate their land with the, 'Food for Work' Programme of the CASA. A Creche Centre will also be opened at this place.

The Redfern Memorial Hospital was started in the year 1906 in the memory of Rev. Earnest Redfern a missionary, in recognition of excellent services rendered by him. It was he who struggled hard to establish this Hospital at Hassan to meet the medical needs of Malnad areas, collecting funds abroad by strenuous efforts, to the tune of 1,600 pounds, besides obtaining contributions from philanthropic agencies for this public cause.

The Golden Jubilee of the Hospital was celebrated in the year 1966, when new buildings had been added to provide suitable accommodation for nurses and doctors. In the past few years the hospital has had a set back due to lack of proper personnel and shortage of funds to meet the growing demands made by progress and current trends in modern medical and surgical practice.

The Hospital Day was observed on 28th February 1976. The Public of Hassan participated in large numbers. An appeal was made by the Superintendent and staff of Redfern Memorial Hospital, Hassan for Rs. 4 lakhs for the badly needed new equipments and buildings.

S. R. FURTADO,
Bishop.

YOUTH RETREAT AND CAREER CONFERENCE IN MANGALORE

A Youth Retreat and Career Conference was held in the Karnataka Theological College Auditorium, Manga-

lore, on 28th February 1976, under the auspices of the Church of South India Karnataka Southern Diocese.

The Rt. Rev. S. R. Furtado, Bishop of the Karnataka Southern Diocese, inaugurated the Conference and delivered the key-note address. The theme of the Conference was 'The Christian Youth in a Changing World'.

Rev. Dr. S. Ananda Kumar, Professor, Karnataka Theological College, Mangalore, and Dr. John Fernandes, Director, Christian Education Department, Mangalore, also addressed the gathering on the theme of the conference.

W. A. KARKADE.

KARNATAKA NORTHERN DIOCESE

Krupalaya, C.S.I. Clinic at Bagalkot

Krupalaya, at Guledgudd, in the Karnataka Northern Diocese where leprosy patients are treated, was established in 1961. Among weavers in the area, a fairly large number have been found to be suffering from leprosy. Leprosy patients form about 1.5% of the total population of this area.

A clinic of Krupalaya was constructed at Bagalkot at a cost of about Rs. 2,00,000 and the building was dedicated in the presence of a distinguished group of invitees on Saturday the 3rd April, 1976 by the Rt. Rev. W. V. Karl, Bishop of the Diocese.

The Rev. V. P. Dandin tracing the history of the building stressed the valuable work done by Dr. A. W. F. Rutgers among the leprosy patients, Dr. A. R. Rao, the medical officer in-charge of the work, was present.

THE REV. O. SIVARAMAIIYA,
Hubli.

KARNATAKA CENTRAL DIOCESE

Youth Activities

A meeting was held at St. Thomas Church, KGF in March where the Youth Secretaries of various Youth Fellowships were present. A Questionnaire was distributed to find the real needs of KGF young people. The answers collected reveal that unemployment has driven our youngsters to mere frustration. The Youth Department is planning on some constructive programmes to help themselves.

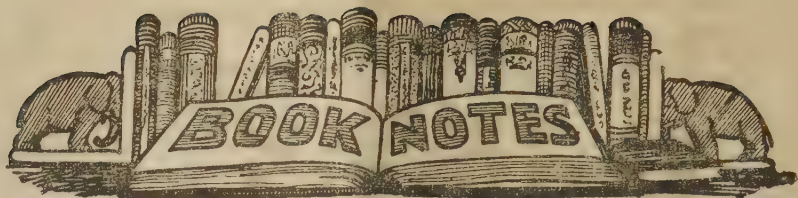
On Saturday, 6th March 1976 over 250 young people from various CSI Churches were present at St. John's School Auditorium for a time of games, tea and contemporary folk musical called 'NATURAL HIGH.' The Bishop distributed the prizes to the winners of the tract writing competition—Miss Ruth Isaac and Mr. Daniel Manohar—both from Memorial Church Youth Fellowship. St. John's Youth Fellowship had done a superb job of organising the entire programme and catering.

Good News Sangeetha Samaj has been giving musical performance in a number of Church Services. The group can render Carnatic or light music in Kannada, Tamil and Telugu. The practices are on every Monday, at 6 p.m. at St. Andrew's Church. Mr. George, one of the Directors of this group has released his first 45 RP record.

ANAND VEERARAJ.

JESUS IN INDIAN PAINTINGS

By RICHARD W. TAYLOR, Christian Literature Society, Madras 1975. Price Rs. 12.50.



The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society has brought out Dr. Richard Taylor's book on Indian paintings in the well-known series called *Confessing the Faith in India*. Earlier volumes in the series include works such as *the Theology of Chenchiah*, *the Theology of Chakkarai* and *the Contribution of E. Stanley Jones*. Volumes in the series are intended to deal with Indian responses to Christ.

Dr. Taylor has tracked down certain Christian paintings produced in the courts of the Moghul kings during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. The Moghul School of painting which flourished for about a hundred years from the time of Akbar to the early years of Aurangazab produced paintings depicting Jesus—some of which were copies of European paintings brought to the court by Jesuit priests. Akbar and Jehangir encouraged tolerance of other religions and were very much interested to hear about Christianity from Jesuit priests. The book contains four illustrations belonging to the Moghul period.

The book contains a reference to a Christian painting owned by the Vijayanagar king Venkata II at the beginning of the seventeenth century and hung in a prominent part of his palace at Vellore.

From the seventeenth century, the scene shifts to the twentieth century, to Bengal the home of Jamini Roy. Dr. Taylor devotes a full chapter to modern Indian painters who are not Christians but who have painted pictures of Jesus. Many of these outstanding painters had chosen Christian themes in order to portray the nature and predicament of man in society. Outstanding artists like K. C. S. Paniker of Madras have produced many paintings of Jesus. A former student of the Madras Christian College, Mr. Paniker is quite familiar with the Bible. When he wanted to depict suffering and pain he chose to paint Jesus. During the 1950's Paniker used to paint figures with disproportionately large heads and one such picture is reproduced in the book in black and white. Unfortunately the original does not exist any more. The chapter includes the works of a dozen well-known painters such as Ravi Varma, Nandanlal Bose and M. Reddeppa Naidu.

Paintings of Jesus by Indian Christian artists is dealt with in the chapter entitled 'Christing Painting'.

Dr. Taylor discusses the works of Angelo da Fonseca and Alfred D. Thomas who made serious efforts during the 1930's to find Indian roots for Christian painting in India. They sought to create authentic Indian images of Christ and yet retaining the universality of Christ. Christ was often portrayed in Indian clothes, as talking to typical Indian villagers and set in typical Indian landscape. The chapter deals with more than a dozen modern Indian painters who are Christians and who have painted figures of Christ. The works of Jyoti Sahi, Frank Wesely, Sister Clare and others are discussed in this chapter. The main concern of Sister Clare has been to spread Christian *bhakti* among the Indian minds.

Dr. Taylor devotes the last chapter to what he calls bazaar and devotional painting. The comparative affluence of a section of Indian Christians is of recent origin. The village Christians are far from affluent and they use mass-produced traditional pictures printed at Sivakasi as objects of devotion in their homes. In many of these paintings Christ is portrayed as having blue or brown eyes, light hair and fair complexion. The fact that such representations of our Lord are accepted by village folk offends the taste of sophisticated Christians.

There is a strong folk tradition in India where different deities are represented in different colours ranging from dark blue and green on the one side to pink and white on the other. Such conventions are accepted by the villagers without any racial interpretation of colour. Very few villagers would have seen light-skinned and blue-eyed foreigners and realised that the colour scheme in the paintings they possess closely resemble an European. While the Hindus would decorate their homes with a calendar picture of a popular deity like Muruga, a Christian would go in for a picture depicting a Christian theme.

The book is illustrated in black and white with reproductions of a dozen modern paintings and four Moghul miniatures. One hopes that Dr. Taylor will bring out in future his entire collection of Indian paintings discussed in his book in a separate volume with plates in black and white and in colour.

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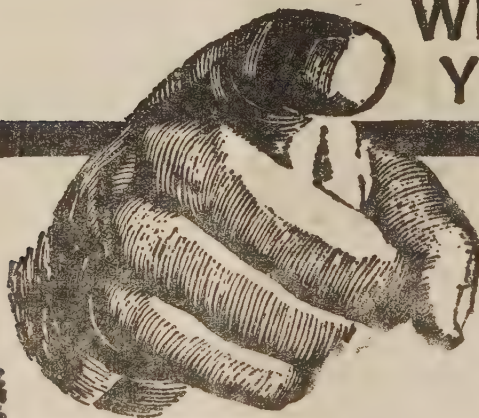
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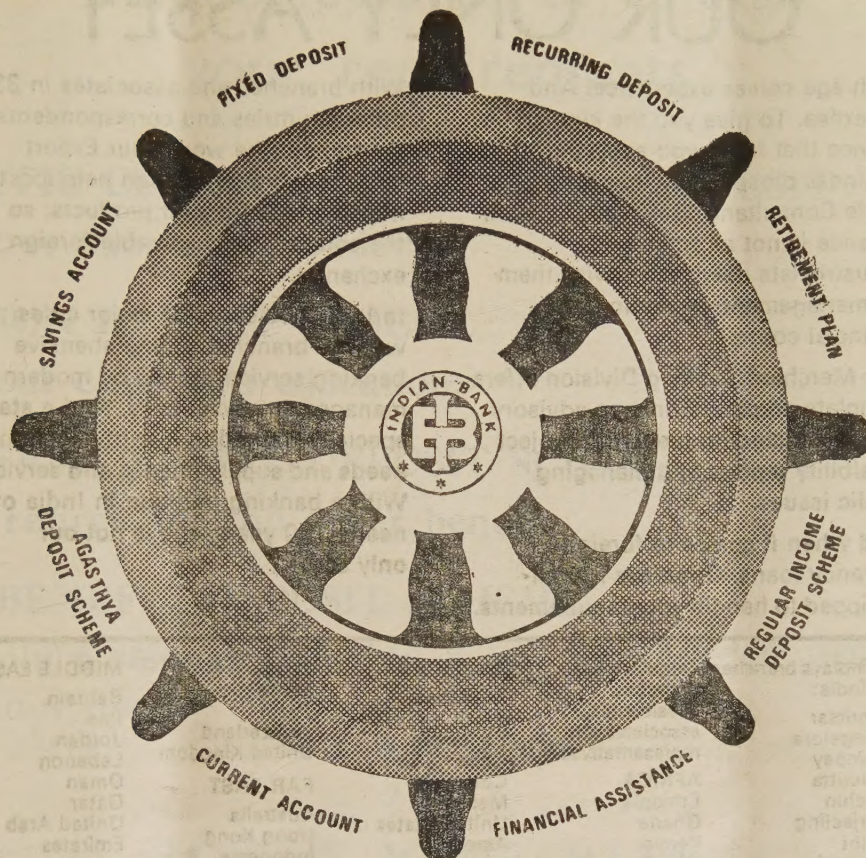
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